

EASING THE BURDEN FOR NEEDY FAMILIES THROUGH EDUCATION FINANCE

So what is the difference between a scholarship, bursary and education finance?

A scholarship is awarded on the basis of a competitive assessment to someone who shows significant talent and potential in certain areas. It is mostly awarded for academic ability.

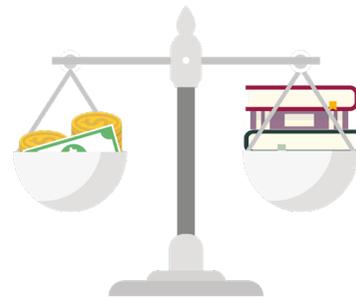
EDUCATION FINANCE OR BURSARY IS QUITE DIFFERENT

Education finance or bursary is quite different. It is granted to someone who cannot afford the fees and who would benefit in both an educational and a social way from what the school has to offer.

Frequently children - orphans, children with parents who are incapacitated in some way, children disadvantaged by circumstances outside their control - are helped by a combination of bursaries from the school or university's dedicated funds.

With this in mind, through the Public Investment Corporation, the GEPF is offering finance to support talented students from every background. If they have the talent and ability, we want to make sure that they have the opportunity to study regardless of one's financial circumstances.

“Recognition of excellence is a powerful motivator. We also need to recognise that many students struggle to make ends meet while at university.” Sithole.



FEES MUST NOT BE A DISINCENTIVE

Through Fundi Capital, the GEPF established EduLoan in 1996 to focus exclusively on the provision of education finance to individuals not qualifying for finance through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or from formal banking sector.

“The granting of bursaries, scholarships or education finance has become far more widespread in the university and tertiary sector in recent years. Recognition of excellence is a powerful motivator. We also need to recognise that many students struggle to make ends meet while at university,” said GPF Principal Executive Officer, Abel Sithole.

“We believe that fees must not be a disincentive for students thinking about higher education and we are committed to attracting and supporting the very best students,” said Sithole.



SCHOOLS FUND HELPS DELIVER QUALITY EDUCATION

Dedicated to facilitate access to affordable independent schools, address infrastructure backlogs and deliver quality education, the Schools and Education Investment Impact Fund of South Africa, the first and largest fund of its kind, has not only boosted the National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate, but has produced impressive outcomes, including the enrolment of more than 21,000 students across 36 schools and employing 1 360 staff, including teachers.

DELIVERING QUALITY EDUCATION

Funded by the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), Old Mutual Life Assurance Company of South Africa (OMLACSA), whose investment is managed by the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) and the Eskom Pension and Provident Fund, the fund finances infrastructure and education-related requirements of schools to help deliver quality education.

“Education is directly linked to economic growth. It is important to enhance the roles of public and private sector, stress the relationship between education and economic growth and emphasise the interests the state and private sector have in a well-educated work force. In this context, education as human resource development has been one of our focus our interest as the GEPF, said Abel Sithole, GEPF Principal Executive Officer.

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“Surveys have shown that parents would opt for an independent school for their children if they could afford the fees amid concerns over standards of government schools. Why is this? Reasons given included a higher standard of education, smaller class sizes and improved discipline.

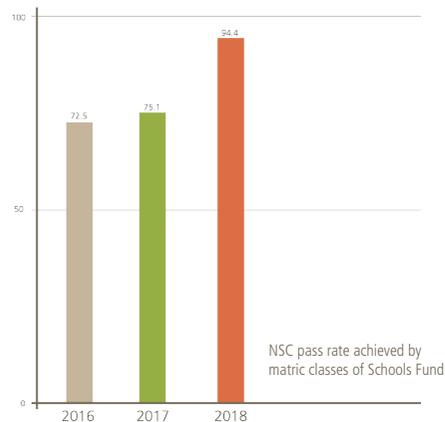
UNIVERSITIES AND FETs

“With independent school pupils progressing on to university and Further Education Training (FET) institutions in far higher numbers, significantly increasing their chances of gaining highly-paid jobs, it is not surprising that despite the current economic climate, thousands of parents still opt to send their children to independent schools,” said Sithole.

That is why the Mutual Life Assurance Company of South Africa, the Government Employees Pension Fund and the Eskom Pension and Provident Fund formed a schools Fund launched in March 2012 and allocated more than R731-million. Now valued at more than R757-million, this means the fund has multiplied 1.37 times. In addition to funding schools, the Schools Fund also targets university and FET institutions.

PERFORMING ABOVE THE MATRIC AVERAGE

The pass rate achieved by the matric classes has shown an improvement year on year, 72.5% in 2016, 75.1% in 2017 and 94.4% in 2018. The average bachelor pass rate of the Schools Fund was 50.2%, also exceeding the national average of 28.7%.



INVESTING IN DISTANCE AND ONLINE LEARNING ENHANCES LIFELONG EDUCATION

As the world suffers from intolerable inequalities, the need for broad and varied learning opportunities to cope with social, economic and technical changes is increasing.

Distance and online learning remains the key strategy for learning and training in the economy of an information society where updated knowledge, skills and information throughout the entire population is the foundation for the development of business and nations.

The institutions invested in by the schools fund have consistently performed above the National Senior Certificate (Matric) average, thanks to our partnering operators, Meridian Schools, Royal Schools, Two Oceans Leadership Academy, St Christopher, Prestige College, Business and Arts South Africa, who believe in affordable quality education.

Through the PIC, the GEPF is committed to investing in key education infrastructure, focus on giving the youth more vocational skills, and raise aspirations and confidence through the education system in order to prepare South Africans to meet the needs and opportunities of the economy of the future.

“Investment in distance and online learning means technologies have shifted to become more learner-centred to provide learners more control over learning irrespective of age, distance and social status.”



THROUGH EDUCOR HOLDINGS

Through Educor Holdings, the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) has invested R400-million in 42 Properties servicing 25 tertiary institutions provided with properties to lease.

This largest provider of private tertiary education in Southern Africa via face-to-face classes, distance learning and online learning, employs 196 permanent employees and 19 temporary staff.

DEFINITIONS OF DISTANCE LEARNING

We are cognisant that there are many definitions of distance and online learning. This include when students are in one place and teachers, peer learners, or resources are in another. The gap in time and space between them is bridged with an array of familiar technology as well as new machines of the information age.

UNESCO has added lifelong learning in the definition of distance and online education. “The term lifelong education and learning denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and developing its potential in such a way

that men and women are agents of their own education,” said UNESCO.

ENHANCE SKILLS WHILE ON THE JOB

For the GEPF, the R400-million investment means any employee, non-management and executives, can still enhance their skills without the necessity of removing them from the job/office, and the training they receive is both relatively cheap and of the same quality for everyone.

Investment in distance and online learning means technologies have shifted to become more learner-centred to provide learners more control over learning irrespective of age, distance and social status.

In the past, typical distance learners were individuals who were unable to participate in the face-to-face educational experiences because of geographic isolation or scheduling conflicts.

Today, through the Public Investment Corporation, the GEPF investment in distance learning institutions such as Lyceum, Damelin, Damelin Correspondence, Intec College, ICESA, Central Technical College and City Varsity, means anyone is a potential distance and online learner.